TRIPS Agreement

4020. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of conditions/obligations to be fulfilled by a country under Article 70.8 and 70.9 of the TRIPs agreement;

(b) whether it is a fact that US has placed India and nine other countries on a priority watch list for failure to provide Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) protection as reported in the Hindustan Times dated the 1st May, 1997;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the extent of India's failure on that account;

(d) the steps taken to correct the picture; and

(e) the progress of Indian Patents Act and the amendments proposed to save India's interest!

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) As per provisions contained in Article 70.8 and 70.9 of the TRIPS Agreement of the WTO Agreement, .a member country who did not provide for product patenting in the areas of pharmaceuticals and agro-chemicals as on the date of coming into force of the WTO Agreement, has to provide a means for receiving product patent applications in these areas and on fulfillment of certain conditions, grant of exclusive marketing rights.

(b) to (d) India has been placed on the priority watch list by United States for the alleged failure of lack of 'legal basis' for filing of applications for product patents in the fields of pharmaceuticals and agro-chemicals and of India's *industrial* property laws falling well short of providing adequate and effective protection, especially a modern patent and trademark legislation.

United States has taken up the matter of alleged lack of 'legal basis' for filing of applications in India with the WTO Dispute Settlement Body The island taken by the United States is being contested.

(e) Presently, there is no proposal under consideration of government to amend the Patents Act, 1970.

Replacement of Premium Indian Tea with CTC Tea

4021. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the premium Indian tea is being replaced to CTC tea from Sri Lanka and Kenya in the international market;

(b) if so, whether any study has been made as to the reasons leading to this change of habits of foreign tea consumers; and

(c) steps proposed to be taken to push the sale of Indian premium tea in the foreign markets?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) and (b) With the rapid growth of international market for value added tea products like tea bags, which essentially require usage of cheaper varieties of CTC teas, Indian CTC teas which are, costlier, on account of their quality, face stiff competition from CTC teas from Kenya which are available at cheaper rates. Other factor favouring Kenyan CTC teas in the European market, is the geographical proximity and hence less sailing time. Sri Lanka, however, is a predominant producer of orthodox teas.

(c) Government and the Tea Board have been analysing country-wise exports of tea giving special attention to areas offering potential. Tea Board also acts to remove bottlenecks in exports to individual markets whenever these are noticed.

Other steps taken to increase exports of Indian tea include (i) participation in major trade fairs/exhibitions abroad; (ii)

media campaign to increase consumer awareness of speciality of Indian tea and campaign to popularise the Tea Board marketing symbol which Stands for pure Indian tea.

New Area for Coffee Growing

4022. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any effort have been made to introduce coffee growing in new areas in the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that the coffee Board is not fulfilling its role in introducing coffee growing in Andhra Pradesh; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. The Coffee Board has been providing technical knowhow to the growers for adopting intensive cultivation and practices and for expansion of coffee in Andhra Pradesh through Research and Extension Network of the Board. During the 9th Plan, 12,500 ha. has been proposed for consolidation and expansion of coffee in Andhra Pradesh, 1600 ha. of which has been proposed to be taken up during 1997-98. Coffee Board has already established Regional Coffee Research Station at R.V. Nagar and Coffee demonstration farm at Minimular in Andhra Pradesh from conducting experiments to evolve cultural practices suitable to agro-climatical conditions prevailing in the areas. Three extension centres located in Chintipalli, Arakuvalley and K D Pet are rendering technical support for improvement of coffee cultivation by adopting various programmes for increasing production and productivity.

Electronic Data Interchange Project

4023. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Project for importers and exporters;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the introduction of Electronic documents processing is likely to cut transaction costs besides leading reduction in time taken to execute the deals;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether Government has hosted three key events for implementation of Electronic Transactions;

(0 if so, the details thereof and when and where these were hosted; and

(g) the details of the benefit achieved and the amount spent on each of the event?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ministry of Commerce, which is the nodal agency for EDI implementation in India, is coodination this project (though not implementing on its own) in all Government regulatory and facilitatory agencies namely Customs, Directorate General of Foreign Trade, Banks, Port Trusts, Airports Authority of India, etc.

The Ministry of Commerce is providing necessary guidelines to all these agencies in consultation with the UN/Asia EDIFACT Board, the regional Arm of UN for promoting EDI in Asia Region.

Further, this ministry has taken various steps to promote EDI. Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) has been given the responsibility to organise workshops & Seminars for Importers and Exporters to create EDI awareness. This